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ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD
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KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER
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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN - EARTHQUAKE: THE ROLE OF NGOS IN THE
USAID/DART EMERGENCY RELIEF EFFORTS

Summary

1. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) subscribes to the overall Government of Pakistan (GOP) Federal Relief Commission (FRC) strategy that primary focus at this stage in the relief effort should be placed on providing in-situ shelter and food security support for earthquake-affected residents. Through its non-governmental organization (NGO) programming, the USAID/DART supports this strategy with implementation activities that focus on commodity distribution, shelter, water and sanitation, livelihoods, protection, health, and education. The USAID/DART has programmed its NGO funds judiciously to cover the key sectors in critical geographic areas in a balanced, strategic manner. End summary.

Funding Strategy

2. The USAID/DART subscribes to the overall GOP FRC strategy that primary focus at this stage in the relief effort should be placed on providing in-situ shelter and food security support for earthquake-affected residents. Secondary focus should be placed on camp-based needs for those who come down from higher elevations due to their inability to endure the harsh winter conditions. This dual strategy both addresses the priorities of the locals and implements a fail-safe mechanism to assure survival.

3. USAID/DART field reports as well as reports from NGOs indicate that much of the earthquake-affected population will remain in place, but a significant number will move down to lowland areas to reside in both spontaneous and organized tented camps. A two-pronged strategy provides the best means to address both situations.

NGO Programming

4. Through its NGO programming, the USAID/DART supports this overall strategy with implementation activities that focus on commodity distribution, shelter, water and sanitation, livelihoods, protection, health, and education. As of November 10, nine international NGOs have been selected to receive an approximate total of USD 20 million through USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The activities funded in these grants emphasize the primary focus of in-situ shelter, livelihoods, health, and education. They also cover camp-based needs in water and sanitation, livelihoods, health, and protection. U.N. organizations have received more than USD 12.9 million in OFDA funding in response to the earthquake. In addition, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have received USD 8 million in OFDA funding. OFDA has funded NGOs and U.N. organizations in order to target affected populations in rural and urban areas, respectively.

5. The USAID/DART is regularly meeting with the country

directors of the NGOs currently receiving USAID funds to discuss their issues, bottlenecks, and collective means of maximizing impact. The USAID/DART believes that targeting NGO activities to the greatest needs of the two-pronged strategy, and facilitating frequent discussions to optimize and possibly redirect activities, represents a targeted yet flexible means of addressing the greatest needs in the relief effort of Pakistan.

16. This support to NGOs has been provided in a deliberate, phased manner. The USAID/DART has committed three tranches of funds. The first round total was approximately USD 22 million, including support for four U.N. agencies: the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. Joint Logistics Center (JLC), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), and the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO). Through this first round of funding, the USAID/DART also committed support to IOM, ICRC, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), primarily for cluster-based coordination and technical support. The second round total was USD 11.5 million, provided to Action Contre la Faim (ACF), ACTED, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), GOAL, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to kick-start field activities in non-food item distribution, shelter, water and sanitation, health, education, and livelihoods.

17. The third round of proposals is currently under review. For this round, international and local NGOs have submitted approximately 25 proposals. The USAID/DART, including its technical experts, is carefully scrutinizing these proposals to ensure focus on strategy, high-quality implementation, appropriate geographical distribution based on need, accountability of funds, and current gaps. Various proposals passed the initial screening for the third round, and thus far three are recommended for funding.

18. The USAID/DART is utilizing maps provided by the U.N. and U.S. military to determine where to meet the needs of the earthquake-affected population. The USAID/DART is also encouraging NGOs to work in the most affected areas. Before approving funding, the USAID/DART undertakes checks to ensure that NGOs do not overlap coverage.

19. These three tranches of grants constitute a step-by-step approach in order to ensure that NGOs are not only working effectively but also are able to address the emergency relief needs that evolve over the course of this disaster relief operation.

----- NGOs and GOP Military Relations -----

10. While NGOs typically tend to be critical of government responses in disaster situations, the USAID/DART's NGO partners have praised the GOP military's participation in this disaster. NGOs active in this disaster response have indicated that the GOP military is distributing tents in an appropriate manner and in critical need areas. Despite media reports to the contrary, USAID cites reports from NGO field representatives to assert that the GOP military has assumed a great deal of responsibility in the relief efforts and performed well under difficult circumstances. Not only has the GOP military proven effective in this exercise in terms of its reach and responsiveness, but it has also been keen to learn from the donor community best practices in addressing technical issues such as camp management, relief commodity distribution, and water and sanitation interventions.

----- USAID/DART Collaboration with NGOs -----

11. The USAID/DART thus continues to work closely with NGOs that have potential to be effective in this context, and will achieve the balance of providing strong and effective support to the relief efforts while exercising flexibility and judiciousness in the use of available resources.

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